



United States Department of Agriculture

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# News Release

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## **USDA Announces Conservation Reserve Program Investments in Iowa**

*More than 115,000 acres in Iowa can begin enrollment to protect water quality and improve wildlife habitat.*

DES MOINES, Iowa, Jan. 3, 2017 – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director, John R. Whitaker announced today the addition of 115,000 acres that can be enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) in Iowa for [critical wildlife and water quality efforts] in addition to the 5423 acres of CRP Grasslands announced in December.

“Over the past 30 years, CRP has helped farmers to offset the costs of restoring, enhancing and protecting certain grasses, shrubs and trees that improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and strengthen wildlife habitat,” said Whitaker. “Given the national cap of 24 million acres, it is more important than ever to pursue multiple benefits on each acre of CRP such that many acres are providing erosion prevention, water conservation, recreation for sportsman, habitat for pollinators, and protection of grazing land.”

Nationwide, farmers and ranchers now can enroll up to 1.1 million acres to restore high-priority wildlife habitat through the CRP State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) program, wetlands restoration, or pollinator habitat improvements. In Iowa, an additional allocation of 50,000 acres and 25,000 acres are now available to enroll in the existing, Gaining Ground for Wildlife SAFE (50,000) and Pheasant Recovery SAFE (25,000) that, in addition to soil erosion prevention and water quality improvements, provides an excellent opportunity for landowners and/or producers to enroll land into CRP to establish a wildlife habitat cover to enhance environmental benefits for the wildlife habitat of the designated or surrounding areas.

In addition to the existing Iowa SAFE project announcements, an all-new SAFE project, called Iowa Early Successional Quail Habitat has been approved for 40,000 acres. The Iowa Early Successional Quail Habitat SAFE project in addition to soil erosion prevention and water quality improvements, is designed to restore early successional habitat where it will be the most beneficial for bobwhite quail. Restoring top quality winter, nesting, and early successional habitats will help increase Iowa quail populations. Other grassland birds and species, especially pollinators, will benefit as well.

Throughout the Obama Administration, USDA has generated thousands of critical partnerships to conserve and protect our natural resources on working landscapes, while enrolling a record number of acres in conservation programs. Seventy-percent of the nation’s land is owned and tended to privately, and America’s farmers, ranchers and landowners have willingly stepped up to address the growing impacts of a changing climate. With USDA’s support, they work to implement voluntary practices that improve air and water quality, prevent soil erosion and create and protect wildlife habitat.

Since 2009, USDA has invested more than \$29 billion to help producers make conservation improvements, working with as many as 500,000 farmers, ranchers and landowners to protect land and water on over 400 million acres nationwide.

To learn more about FSA's conservation programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation) or contact a local FSA county office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov/>.

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